

Testimony in Support of & Commenting on HB 5037 - Dental Reimbursement Rates
Richard Rodriguez from New Haven, Connecticut

Senators Kushner, Cicarella, Osten, Hartley, and Miner, Representatives Abercrombie, Betts, Walker, Dathan, Nolan, and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Richard Rodriguez and I live in New Haven, Connecticut.

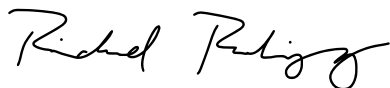
I am here today in my role as a concerned community member, a graduate student of public health, and a dentist to testify in support of H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023, specifically the proposed reimbursement rate increase for adult dental services.

The proposed increased reimbursement rates for adults seeking dental treatment on HUSKY are greatly appreciated, especially the proposed endodontic rate matching the children's rate. However, we are concerned the 25% increase is too small to increase provider participation. **In order to increase provider participation in Medicaid, adult dental reimbursement rates need to be increased to parity with the child rates.**

With my experience as a dentist, I have firsthand seen the consequences for those unable to access dental services within a timely manner. After pulling countless teeth and difficult conversations with patients and their families, I want to advocate for the adults of Connecticut on HUSKY. Through increased reimbursement rates for providers, there is an opportunity to expand the network and provide residents with comprehensive dental coverage. Our society has neglected to provide necessary oral health coverage for our communities, and the state of Connecticut has a chance to show the rest of the country how important oral health is in relation to systemic health.

I urge you to increase the adult Medicaid reimbursement rates to bring them to parity with the child Medicaid rates. This will allow family dental practices to accept Medicaid patients of all ages, expanding the network and improving access to care.

We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we can best provide comprehensive dental care to Connecticut's low-income residents. Thank you for your time and for supporting access to care in Connecticut.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Rodriguez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Rodriguez" clearly distinguishable.

Richard Rodriguez, DDS